

CORRESPONDENCE

A Scheme of Practical Eugenics

To the Editor, *Eugenics Review*

SIR,—It was with much pleasure and keen interest that I read Mr. J. H. Marshall's letter in your July issue, and saw that once more the work of Les Jardins Ungemach has been brought to the attention of British eugenicists. I was afraid it had been definitely forgotten!

In past numbers of the *EUGENICS REVIEW* I have written about these gardens which I visited in 1931 and described at the Centenary meetings of the British Association in London, when invited to speak for a few minutes after Professor Ruggles Gates's address on Eugenic Education.

In that year I was in London and saw many distinguished people with a view to founding a similar garden city in England. Everybody of course approved, but raised innumerable practical difficulties. Our late President, Sir Bernard Mallet, appeared more interested than anyone else, and promised to do all in his power to help. In a long interview I had with him at his house, he did not think it impossible that the *Society* might be persuaded to do something; and I returned to Barcelona, where I then resided, with high hopes. Alas! Sir Bernard died within a few months; nobody else was sufficiently interested to give the help I needed; and although the *Society* invited me to lecture on the subject of a Eugenic Colony, I was prevented from doing so by restrictions imposed by a South American government upon the remission of money to Europe, which obliged me to return at once to that continent, where I was forced to remain until this year.

I however visited the great Southern Plateau of Brazil and you were good enough to publish my article upon the possibilities of a eugenic colony in Brazil—but, of course, nothing came of it. By the publication of books and pamphlets I have tried again and again to arouse interest in practical eugenics of this sort, but, as a correspondent of mine in Latvia says, perhaps only too truly, "until the ruling class perceives the necessity of practical eugenics nothing is ever done nor will be."

In view, however, of Mr. Marshall's letter, I should like to make a suggestion: *Will all Fellows and Members of our Society who think it should use some of its idle capital in furthering a scheme for founding a Jardin Ungemach, or similar colony, in England, write at once to the Chairman of the Council expressing their views?* I am doing so to-day.

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Sex and Culture

To the Editor, *Eugenics Review*

SIR,—I anticipated, after Mr. Aldous Huxley in his *Ends and Means* (1937) had popularized and commended the late Dr. Unwin's *Sex and Culture* (1934), that it would not be long before the latter work was quoted as conclusive evidence of the very speculations it puts forward.

To those who are tempted to follow the uncritical acceptance of Dr. Unwin's theories contained in Mr. Fyson's letter in your July number I should like to bring to notice the following facts:

1. More than half Dr. Unwin's book is devoted to a study of eighty selected *uncivilized* societies.
2. This study reveals a correlation between coercive sexual restraint and complexity of religious rites.
3. At this point Dr. Unwin (on his own showing) adduces no more material.
4. By appeals to psycho-analysis, and to analogy with physical science, he then insists that the sexual restraint and the ritual complexity must have the relation of cause and effect.
5. The application and elaboration of this principle in regard to *civilized* societies is carried on by entirely *a priori* argument.
6. Only five pages are devoted to modern history and the results of sexological and other investigators into modern social conditions are neglected *in toto*.

I have treated this matter in more detail than your space will allow in the August number of *Plan*. If any of your readers care to refer to my article they will, I think, be convinced that Dr. Unwin cannot reasonably be quoted as an authority for anything more than the narrow anthropological thesis at (2) above, certainly not in support of any policy dealing with the sexual behaviour of present-day men and women.

ALEC CRAIG.

London, N.W.3.

To the Editor, *Eugenics Review*

SIR,—Mr. Craig objects to my third suggestion. I hope that I may count on his as vigorous support for the other two. It seems to me that Dr. Unwin was quite justified in applying to our civilization, with its constantly changing social influences, the law he had found to act in the smaller and more stable uncivilized societies. To reason from the simple to the complex is a general method in science. No one doubts that the reactions to gravity and light, discovered on plants isolated in the laboratory, hold also of plants in the field or

hedgerow. Of his psychological explanation I am not qualified to judge, and I have written that I prefer my own biological one: but the facts do seem to lead to the conclusion which Dr. Unwin stressed, that the rise of human culture has been through continence.

In *Plan*, to which he refers us, Mr. Craig suggests that sexual control by public opinion and rise in culture may "both be effects of the same social urge" (not cause and effect): but the intense animosity which, as Mr. Craig himself shows, any idea of control raises in cultured people of our twentieth century (heirs though they be of all the ages) is surely proof sufficient that this is not so.

Will Mr. Craig read my letters again? He will see that his opening clauses are not really applicable to me. And I am not asking for legislation, only that self-control may be helped, and Dr. Unwin's work made known, so that people may order their lives for the benefit of their children-to-be.

Finally in view of what Dr. Unwin wrote in his Preface, is it quite fair to decry his work as based on selected material? The selection was only of the societies sufficiently well known, and he had found nothing in other societies to weaken his conclusions.

P. F. FYSON.

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Birth Control Laws in U.S.A.

To the Editor, *Eugenics Review*

SIR,—You will doubtless be interested in the news that the Comstock Law has been notably amended, if not all but wiped out, in so far as it prohibits the importation into the United States of contraceptive literature even when consigned to a layman—this as a result of a favourable decision in the case of *United States v. Certain Magazines (Marriage Hygiene)* in which I was the Appellee or defendant.

Shortly after the United States Customs began detaining and/or seizing copies of *Marriage*

Hygiene I asked Mr. Morris Ernst to defend the case. The Government was a long time deciding whether it would start libel proceedings. Finally it did.

In July 1937 Judge Galston of the United States District Court in New York dismissed the libel. The Government then appealed the case. In April 1938 the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the Second District decided against the Government. *The Court held that contraceptive literature could enter this country under the Tariff Act without interference on the part of the Collector of Customs provided the consignee, even though a layman, was a person qualified to receive it.* Although the United States Attorney urged Washington to appeal the case to the United States Supreme Court this has not been done within the ninety-day time limit provided by law. Accordingly, this adjudication is now a part of the law.

Mr. Alexander Lindey of Greenbaum, Wolff and Ernst, who fought the case as a public service in the interests of the defence and extension of American civil liberties, writes me as follows regarding the case under date of September 16th:

"We have won a very important legal victory, and one that is likely to have a highly salutary effect on the treatment accorded by lower courts to contraceptive books and materials. Prior to this decision, it was the policy of the Government to stop all contraceptive literature at the customs regardless of the identity of the consignee. We now have an adjudication that such literature may freely enter, *provided* the consignee is a person qualified to receive it. The qualifications of the consignee may be established by a mere affidavit, and the procedure is very simple."

I feel sure that readers of the *Eugenics Review* will be glad to learn of this favourable decision.

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